

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

As a customer of DIRECTV, I am writing to urge you to support the pending merger of EchoStar and HUGHES, the parent company of DIRECTV. I believe the merger will increase video and broadband choices for consumers like me.

The combined company will be a much stronger competitor to cable operators by being able to offer me local TV channels via satellite in my market area, which I currently do not receive.

I currently have broadband access to the Internet, but the combination of EchoStar and HUGHES will result in increased competition in the broadband market by providing an affordable high-speed Internet service nationwide via satellite.

The only reasoning I have seen provided from those opposed to the merger is that those who only have satellite service available to them will now only have one choice. Well, what about the CATV industry. Yes we have two cable companies in our area, but ONLY ONE that I can get service from, so where is the competition there. We as CONSUMERS and VOTING Americans are more interested in the level and quality of service than limiting our choices in providers. If we don't like a service or the cost is prohibitive then we don't buy it. The entertainment industry is not a public commodity like water, electricity, natural gas or LP (don't get me started on those astronomical prices) that is 'almost' required to live, BTW, some Americans survived before those things were readily available and guess what we don't get a choice on who provides those utilities either!! It has been mentioned that for a FEW the choices will be limited. Well, for the majority the choices are ALREADY limited, (e.g., I only have ONE choice for Broadband internet).

The merger would afford me more choices. Also, as an early adopter of HD TV, the merger would allow me access to more HD programming, whereas now to get the most programming I would have to subscribe to BOTH satellite services and have three dishes on my roof. Please listen to what the CONSUMERS want and not what the CATV lobbyists tell you WE want. I have been subjected to the cable monopoly for too many years and it is time to allow the DBS companies to compete fairly.

I appreciate your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Joe Sanford  
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Madison, AL 35758